

GIFT AND METHOD OF PROVIDING SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field Of The Invention

The present invention generally relates to novelty gifts and methods of providing amusement. More particularly, the invention relates to a unique form of a “get well” gift that includes simulated pharmaceutical packaging which presents a humorous or thoughtful interplay between the packaging and the surprise contents within the packaging, as well as a method of providing the gift.

Discussion of the Prior Art

Novelty gifts and greeting cards are quite common, including in the context of providing a “get well” gift. However, such gifts typically take the form of a greeting card bearing a sympathetic or humorous message, or simply a conventional gift item, in hope of raising the spirits of the person who is ill or injured. There exist other types of novelty gifts with unconventional packaging but which are not necessarily intended to be given to a patient or ill individual. Such gifts may seek to provide items with a particular theme.

For instance, U.S. Patent 6,092,658 discloses a simulated baby bottle gift package. The package is in the form of a clear plastic, easy to open baby bottle, that can house gifts for a small child.

U.S. Patent 4,207,981 discloses a bottle in the form of a bottle for an alcoholic beverage that is intended to serve as a “gag” gift. The bottle contains a colored liquid and a clear or tinted seal located in the neck of the bottle, spaced from the opening. The colored liquid simulates the

alcohol, while the seal in the neck prevents the pouring of the liquid from the bottle, to the surprise of the individual that opens the bottle but cannot access its contents.

In a further example, U.S. Patent 6,343,699 discloses a humorous desk accessory for holding typical desk implements, such as pens and pencils. The desk accessory openly bears inscriptions of brand name prescription medications and has non-toxic materials for limited consumption.

Also, available to consumers is a line of products from Innovative Concept Marketing Ltd. which includes bottles of candy, bearing jokes based on common slang terminology. For instance, the bottles look like a common clear plastic aspirin bottle and a person can plainly see the bottle contains small candies in place of the pills. The bottles bear labels that present a humorous message based on a phrase or theme, such as "Couch Potato Pills", but do not present any surprise in relation to the contents of the bottle.

It is very common for one who is ill, injured or hospitalized to receive a gift or "get well" card from family or friends, as well as prescription medications from a doctor. It is desirable to have an alternative to the all too common conventional greeting card or gift. It also is desirable to present a gift that provides some surprise and/or amusement for the recipient. It is further desirable to provide such a gift which also incorporates the context of providing medication for the recipient.

The present invention addresses shortcomings in prior art "get well" gifts, while providing the above mentioned desirable features in a unique gift format, as well as a method of providing the gift.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The purpose and advantages of the invention will be set forth in and apparent from the description and drawings that follow, as well as will be learned by practice of the invention.

The present invention is generally embodied in a gift that includes simulated pharmaceutical packaging which presents a humorous or thoughtful interplay between the packaging and the surprise contents within the packaging.

In a first aspect of the invention, a gift includes a substantially opaque container and a substantially opaque lid that engages the container. The chosen container and lid resemble a pharmaceutical package. Disposed in the container is at least one surprise item. Accompanying the container is written material that has an interplay with the at least one surprise item in the container.

In a second aspect of the invention, the above-mentioned container with lid and at least one surprise item are placed in a bag.

In a third aspect of the invention, a method of providing a gift includes selecting a substantially opaque container, selecting a substantially opaque lid that engages the container, selecting at least one surprise item and placing the at least one surprise item in the container. The lid is then engaged with and closes the container. The container further includes written material presenting an interplay with the at least one surprise item.

Thus, the present invention presents an alternative to the typical “get well” card or gift, and plays off the fact that medicines are often prescribed for an illness or injury. Written material may be directly printed on the container or presented on a label that is attached to the container, or may be directly printed on or attached by means of a label to a bag that holds the container and lid. The written material is chosen to correspond to the surprise contents in the container, and is intended to incorporate a humorous or thoughtful interplay with the contents in the container. The container may resemble a pharmaceutical bottle or box, and the written material may include a fictitious pharmacy name and a description or instructions relating to the

surprise contents in the container. The substantially opaque nature of the container and lid at least partially obscure the container contents from plan view and help set the stage for the surprise. A bag also may be used to assist in providing packaging that, at first glance, resembles medicine from a pharmacy, as well as to address the gift and/or further set the stage for the surprise. In this respect, the bag may be transparent or substantially opaque.

It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and provided for purposes of explanation only, and are not restrictive of the invention, as claimed. Further features and objects of the present invention will become more fully apparent in the following description of the preferred embodiment and from the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In describing the preferred embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawing figures wherein like parts have like reference numerals, and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of the exterior of a substantially opaque container, having a label on a semi-transparent plastic bottle, with a substantially opaque lid and written material on the container setting up a surprise or joke based on the unforeseen contents of the container.

FIG. 2 is a plan view of an alternative substantially opaque container, having a non-transparent container with an upper edge having tabs for use with a twist-type locking lid, and without any written material on the container.

FIG. 3 is a further plan view of a substantially opaque container like that of FIG. 2, but having an upper edge adapted for use with a snap-fit substantially opaque lid and showing labels on the container.

FIG. 4 is a cross-section of a substantially opaque container like that of FIGS. 1 and 3, but showing at least one surprise item in the container which completes the joke set up by the written material on the exterior of the container or on a bag.

FIG. 5 is a plan view of a further embodiment of a container with an integrally hinged lid.

FIG. 6 is a plan view of a bag in which the assembled container, lid and at least one surprise item may be placed as a further accessory or portion of the packaging to be included in an aspect of the humorous or thoughtful gift.

It should be understood that the drawings are not to scale. While considerable mechanical details of a container and lid structure, including details of fastening means and other plan and section views of the particular components, have been omitted, such details are not per se part of the present invention and are considered well within the comprehension of those skilled in the art in light of the present disclosure. It also should be understood that the present invention is not limited to the preferred embodiments illustrated.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring generally to FIGS. 1-6, it will be appreciated that the gift and method of providing a gift of the present invention generally may be embodied within numerous configurations.

Referring to a preferred embodiment in FIG. 1, a gift 10 is shown, which includes a container 12, with a lid 14 that engages container 12. Container 12 and lid 14 may be made of any suitable materials, each may be formed of more than one piece and of more than one material, but they are preferably made of plastic and are substantially opaque when assembled. In the context of this invention, substantially opaque means that the materials at least partially obscure one's view of the contents of the container, which can be more clearly identified when the container is opened. It will be appreciated that substantially opaque contemplates materials

that provide at least a partially obstructed view, may range from semi-transparent up to and including materials that would be completely opaque, or any other combination of materials. Therefore, the materials may present any form of at least partial obstruction to ones view, including such forms as having color, or a frosted or etched appearance, or being made of fibrous material, or including a label or liner that is not transparent.

To most appropriately capture the spirit of the invention, it is preferable that container 12 be made of the plastic used in amber-colored, light-sensitive pharmaceutical bottles, or of a material bearing a resemblance thereto, and that the container bear a corresponding label. Similarly, lid 14 may be made of any type of material which is substantially opaque, and preferably is made of the white plastic commonly used in lids for the aforementioned pharmaceutical bottles, or of a material bearing a resemblance thereto.

Moreover, it will be appreciated that container 12 and lid 14 may have any one of many types of corresponding structures that will allow lid 14 to engage and close container 12. For instance, shown in FIG. 2 on container 12 are locking tabs 16 which are configured to engage corresponding structures on lid 14 to lock the two components together when closed. Such locking devices may take the form of child-proof structures, so as to prevent children from opening container 12, or may be of less sophisticated structure, such as with threaded engagement. As a further example, shown in FIG. 3 on container 12 is a flange 18 which is configured to engage and snap-fit to a suitably adapted lid, not shown.

It is further contemplated that reference to a container and a lid may include embodiments, such as that shown in FIG. 5, having a container and a lid permanently attached together or molded so as to be of a continuous structure, such as with an integral web or hinge

between them. Such containers are quite commonly found in the form of a cardboard box or a plastic container with an integral hinge and lid.

Container 12 of gift 10 further contains at least one surprise item 20 which is shown, for example, as a miniature four-legged stool in the preferred embodiment of FIG. 4. The surprise item may be of virtually any type of product and in any form, including solid, liquid, gas, alone or in any combination thereof. Moreover, while stated in the singular for convenience, it should be appreciated that “surprise item” in the context of this invention certainly may encompass a plurality.

An integral part of the invention is the inclusion of written material to set up the joke or thoughtful gesture provided by the gift. The written material accompanies the container. Thus, one form of such written material 22 may be provided on the container 12, by printing or other suitable method of application to a label, as shown in FIG. 1, or directly to container 12, as shown in FIG. 5. Another form of such written material 24 may be similarly provided on a label or by direct application to a bag 26 in which the assembled container, lid and surprise item are placed, as shown in FIG. 6. Bag 26 may be of any suitable material, such as paper or plastic, and may be transparent but preferably is substantially opaque, so as to further portray an actual prescription package and to assist in setting the stage for the joke or thoughtful gesture experienced by the recipient upon opening the bag 26 and container 12.

The written material need not be limited to one location, or only be on a label or on container 12 or bag 26, individually. Additional written material 28, such as on the label in FIG. 3, may be used to enhance the surprise or the awareness that the gift is not an actual prescription container, and if the gift includes a bag 26, then written material may be provided on container 12, as well as bag 26. In addition, written material will be understood as not limited to

alphabetic or numeric characters and it is contemplated that such written material may include any variety of other graphic representations or designs.

The nature of the invention calls for an interplay between the at least one surprise item 20 or contents of container 12 and the written material accompanying container 12, by appearing on container 12 and/or bag 26. An example of this is shown in FIGS. 1 and 4, where in FIG. 1, label 22 is intended to state “The Funny Pharmacy not your regular medicine. Something for you in case the doctor needs one. A stool sample.” FIG. 4 then shows a surprise item 20, a miniature four-legged stool, that would be placed in container 12 and at least partially obscured from view. Thus, upon opening lid 14, the recipient would experience the amusement provided by finding surprise item 20 which completes the intended joke. Bag 26, as shown in FIG. 6, could be used to build suspense and/or to facilitate addressing the gift to the intended recipient. The portion of written material 24 shown in FIG. 6 as printed directly on bag 26, stating, “The Funny Pharmacy not your regular medicine” and “Get Well Wishes” accompanies container 12 and is intended to provide notice that the packaging does not contain regular prescription medicine, while serving to peak the curiosity of the recipient. The written material 24 on bag 26 may be specifically related to the at least one surprise item 20 in container 12, or may serve as a common prelude for a variety of different humorous or thoughtful gestures that are more specifically set up between the written material 22 on container 12 and the contents of container 12, namely the at least one surprise item 20.

The method of providing a gift 10 in accordance with the present invention includes selecting a substantially opaque container 12 bearing written material and a substantially opaque lid 14 that engages container 12. It will be appreciated that container 12 may be of any shape or size, including an extremely large container to enclose, for example, a large stuffed animal. The

method further includes selecting at least one surprise item and placing the at least one surprise item in the container. Thus, it may be appropriate for container 12 to house a large stuffed teddy bear, if for example, the written material and get well wishes include a prescription for a hug. As noted previously, and as will be readily understood in the context of this disclosure, the at least one surprise item may be a plurality of items, such as candies of a specific type that would set up a surprise and correspond to the written material on the container 12 and/or bag 26.

Once the at least one surprise item 20 is placed in container 12, the method includes engaging the lid 14 with container 12. This may involve closing container 12 with a separate lid or an integral hinged lid. The written material on container 12 presents an interplay with surprise item 20 in container 12. The written material may be applied directly to the container or to a label that is affixed to the container. There are no particular boundaries to the humorous or thoughtful gesture that may be set up by the interplay between the written material and the at least one surprise item 20. The method may further include selecting a bag 26 and placing in bag 26 the previously assembled container 12, lid 14, and at least one surprise item 20. Moreover, a bag 26 may be selected with written material directly applied thereto, or such written material may be applied by application of a label which bears written material. Finally, it will be appreciated that the method steps need not be followed specifically in the order presented in the appended claims.

It will be appreciated that the gift and method of providing such gift in accordance with the present invention may be provided in various configurations. Any variety of suitable materials of construction, configurations, shapes and sizes for the containers, lids, and/or bags may be used in the packaging to satisfy the particular needs and requirements of an end user. It also should be understood that a variety of items of various construction, configurations, shapes

and sizes may serve as the surprise contents to complete the humorous or thoughtful gesture associated with the gift. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications can be made in the design and construction of such a gift without departing from the scope or spirit of the present invention. Other embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the invention disclosed herein.